

The North Face Addresses Inequity in the Outdoors and Pledges to RESET Exploration with Upcoming Fellowship Program



The world's largest outdoor brand commits to donating \$7 million and joins with passionate experts across industries, including Lena Waithe and Jimmy Chin, to help develop scalable solutions that support access to exploration

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The North Face →

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DENVER, Oct. 15, 2020 /PRNewswire/ -- The North Face today launched "Reset Normal," a global initiative encouraging people everywhere to reset their lives through exploration in the hope of progress and discovery that is so needed in today's challenging environment.

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The North Face Joins with Emmy Award-Winning Screenwriter Lena Waithe to Address Inequity in the Outdoors with New Global Initiative “Reset Normal”

As part of this initiative, the brand will be launching the Explore Fund Council, a global fellowship with the goal of bringing together passionate experts across culture, entertainment, academia and the outdoors to develop ideas and potential scalable solutions to help support access to exploration. The learnings, findings and recommendations from this expert group will be used to help guide how The North Face directs a new, significant financial commitment - \$7 million - to organizations with the goal of building equity in the outdoors and creating opportunities for all.

The program will launch with the help of two experts who have been resetting their own industries for years, and who will bring unique perspectives and expertise to tackling the obstacles that currently prevent equitable exploration for all. These experts include Lena Waithe, an Emmy Award-winning screenwriter, producer and actor who has devoted her career to championing underrepresented artists and communities through her production company Hillman Grad, and Jimmy Chin, The North Face Global athlete, climber, and Academy Award-winning director.

"For me, exploration has always been a mindset. As a creative I see myself as a constant, curious explorer and I believe everyone can have and should have access to this right," said Lena Waithe. "The only real way to see change happen is by helping to create it yourself. I'm excited to work with The North Face and all of the Explore Fund Council members so our collective perspectives can help diversify the outdoors and make it a more equal place for all."

"Throughout my life, exploration has been a constant source of positivity. I truly believe it is part of what makes us all human, and that exploration can bring people together and change lives," said Jimmy Chin, The North Face Global athlete. "Not everyone has the same access to or opportunity for outdoor adventure. This is an issue I'm excited to take on alongside The North Face and the other Explore Fund Council members."

Waithe and Chin will work alongside additional creatives, academic experts, outdoor industry partners and more, so that collectively they can develop ideas to help create meaningful change. Together, this group will bring new perspective and input for how The North Face develops, selects and funds organizations through The Explore Fund. The plan is to have the full Explore Fund Council group of fellows in place and announced in Spring 2021.

Currently, communities of color are three times more likely to live in nature-deprived places¹ and often face racism and other systemic challenges when they do explore. In its first year, the goal is for the Explore Fund Council to focus on how to create more culturally relevant exploration opportunities and connect diverse communities to the benefits of exploration.

"For ten years, we've been working to reset the barriers to exploration and make it more accessible for all through our Explore Fund," said Steve Lesnard, Global VP of Marketing and Product for The North Face. "But 2020 has proven we need to radically accelerate that work and collaborate with a broad-reaching community to help us do so. We're really excited to work alongside changemakers like Lena and Jimmy, and I believe the Explore Fund Council will help us foster a new, more equitable era for the outdoor industry."

The North Face plans to address the need for equity and opportunity in the outdoor industry via additional programs, as well. This includes working to facilitate new and additional mentorship opportunities that would help empower future explorers who are curious, interested and passionate about the outdoors – but may not have access to equipment, adventures or outdoors experts they can look up to and learn from.

The Reset Normal campaign will launch with a video anthem film by Sid Lee that brings to life the crucial turning point we are experiencing culturally in 2020 and shows how people can reset through the power of exploration. Lena Waithe will conduct the voiceover for this powerful film alongside music by Aloe Blacc. Blacc's new single, 'My Way', the lead track off his first album in seven years, reflects the campaign's motivational tone of inspiring others in a challenging time.

The North Face athletes and ambassador partners will also be tasked with creating personal pledge videos that share their individual stories and aspirations about how they would like to reset their normal in 2020. The brand plans to release easily sharable Instagram AR lenses and TikTok filters to encourage people everywhere to get involved and share how they pledge to reset their normal in 2020.

The North Face, a division of VF Outdoor, LLC, was founded in 1966 with the goal of preparing outdoor athletes for the rigors of their next adventure. Today we are the world's leading outdoor brand, creating athlete-tested, expedition-proven products that help people explore and test the limits of human potential. We protect our outdoor playgrounds and minimize our impact on the planet through programs that encourage sustainability. The North Face products are available at premium and specialty retail sporting goods stores globally and is headquartered in Denver, Colorado. For more information, please visit www.thenorthface.com.

Agency Credits:

Reset Normal creative, including a campaign anthem spot, digital shorts and advertising across print, digital and social media was supported by The North Face agency of record Sid Lee. United Entertainment Group supported as The North Face consumer communication and influencer agency. Essence Global supported the campaign as the media agency.

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1 *The Nature Gap: Confronting Racial and Economic Disparities in the Destruction and Protection of Nature in America* By Jenny Rowland-Shea, Sahir Doshi, Shanna Edberg, and Robert Fanger, July 2020

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